

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 112889

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 112889

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 112889 SENT JERUSALEM INFO ATHENS  
ANKARA NATO BONN LONDON PARIS DATED MAY 29.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 112889

TOSEC 1156 JERUSALEM BONN LONDON ZFF ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PFOR, GR, TU

SUBJECT:GREEK/TURKISH AEGEAN DISPUTE: TURKISH SHIPS ENTER  
DISPUTED AEGEAN AREA  
PARIS FOR HARTMAN

1. LONG SIMMERING ISSUE OF OIL EXPLORATION RIGHTS IN  
AEGEAN HAS COME TO BOIL WITH TURKISH GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCE-  
MENT THAT TURKISH RESEARCH VESSEL DEPARTED TURKISH NAVAL  
BASE AFTERNOON MAY 29 TO DISPUTED AREA TO BEGIN  
"MAGNETOMETRIC" PROBE FOR OIL DEPOSITS. ACCORDING  
ANNOUNCEMENT, VESSEL ACCOMPANIED BY STRONG NAVAL ESCORT.  
TURKISH ARMED FORCES WERE PLACED ON PARTIAL ALERT OVER  
WEEKEND.

2. GIVEN ADAMANT GREEK CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY OVER AEGEAN  
SEABED AND BELLIGERENT STANCE OF GREEK MILITARY ON THIS  
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PAGE 02 STATE 112889

ISSUE, IT IS PROBABLE THAT GREEKS WILL CHALLENGE WHAT

THEY CONSIDER PROVOCATIVE TURKISH MOVE. GREEK ARMED FORCES PLACED ON ALERT FOLLOWING TURKISH ANNOUNCEMENT. SINCE TURKISH RESEARCH VESSEL SCHEDULED ARRIVE IN DISPUTED AREA MORNING MAY 30, POSSIBILITY OF CONFRONTATION EXISTS FROM THAT TIME.

3. BACKGROUND OF DISPUTE AS FOLLOWS. FOR NUMBER OF YEARS

GREECE AND TURKEY HAVE DISPUTED RIGHTS TO SEABED EXPLORATION WEST OF GREEK ISLANDS (LIMNOS, LESVOS, CHIOS) LYING OFF TURKISH COAST. GREEKS DRAW DEMARCATION LINE HALFWAY BETWEEN GREEK ISLANDS AND TURKISH COAST. TURKS CLAIM EXPLORATION RIGHTS ON WHAT THEY INSIST IS CONTINENTAL SHELF OF ANATOLIAN LAND MASS, WHICH EXTENDS WEST OF GREEK ISLANDS, AND THEY INSIST ON DEMARCATION LINE HALFWAY BETWEEN GREEK AND TURKISH MAINLANDS. RESULT IS AREA NOW IN DISPUTE BETWEEN GREEK AND TURKISH DEMARCATION LINES. GREECE HAS IN PAST GRANTED EXPLORATION CONCESSIONS TO VARIOUS FOREIGN COUNTRIES IN THIS AREA AND WE UNDERSTAND TWO DRY HOLES PREVIOUSLY DRILLED. QUESTION OF EXPLORATION RIGHTS BEGAN HEATING UP FOLLOWING SUBSTANTIAL GREEK OIL FIND (IN WATERS CLEARLY UNDER GREEK CONTROL) OFF THE ISLAND OF THASSOS.

4. IN FEBRUARY, TURKISH GOVERNMENT DELIVERED NOTE TO GREEK GOVERNMENT STATING THEIR POSITION ON AEGEAN ISSUE AND REQUESTING THAT MATTER BE DISCUSSED BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. GREEK GOVERNMENT DELAYED RESPONSE UNTIL LATE MAY. IN INTERIM BELLICOSE PRESS CAMPAIGN DEVELOPED IN BOTH COUNTRIES, AND GREEKS TOOK MILITARY STEPS INCLUDING ARMAMENTS FOR GREEK ISLANDS. WE UNDERSTAND GOT MEANWHILE DEVELOPED PLAN TO TEST GREEK POSITION BY SENDING RESEARCH VESSEL WITH NAVAL ESCORT INTO DISPUTED AREA. ON MAY 24, GREEK GOVERNMENT DELIVERED NOTE TO GOT WHICH DID NO MORE THAN REITERATE GREEK POSITION ON DEMARCATION. GOT FIRST RESPONDED WITH SATISFACTION, BUT LATER, AFTER FURTHER SOUNDINGS IN ATHENS, INDICATED THAT THE GREEK REPLY WAS NOT RESPONSIVE. THE GREEK FOREIGN MINISTER CONFIRMED TO AMBASSADOR TASCA THAT THE GREEK POSITION REMAINED ADAMANT. SUBSEQUENTLY THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 112889

TURKISH PLAN TO BEGIN EXPLORATIONS WAS IMPLEMENTED.

5. PROPOSED ACTION. WE SEEK YOUR APPROVAL FOR THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

A) STABLER TO CALL IN BOTH GREEK AND TURKISH AMBASSADORS, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

B) MAKE PARALLEL DEMARCHES AT HIGH LEVEL IN ATHENS AND ANKARA.

C) REQUEST BRITISH AND GERMANS TO SUPPORT OUR DEMARCHES.

D) ASK SECRETARY GENERAL LUNS URGENTLY TO APPROACH GREEK AND TURK PERMREPS.

6. LINE WE PLAN TO TAKE AS FOLLOWS:

A) WITH GREEKS:

SECR

TARY KISSINGER HAS ASKED THAT WE CONVEY THE FOLLOWING: WE ARE AWARE OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AEGEAN ISSUE AND WE ARE URGING THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT TO TAKE NO ACTION THAT WILL ADD FURTHER TO THIS DISPUTE. WE HOPE THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WILL AGREE THAT DISCUSSIONS WITH TURKEY PROVIDE THE BEST CHANCE FOR A SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION. TURKISH AND GREEK FOREIGN MINISTERS WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE AT THE OTTAWA MINISTERIAL. WITHOUT TAKING ANY POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE MERITS OF THE CASE, WE URGE BOTH PARTIES TO USE UTMOST CONSTRAINT AND PATIENCE IN THIS SITUATION TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION THAT WOULD DAMAGE THE ALLIANCE AND THE SECURITY INTERESTS OF ALL PARTIES. WHATEVER ACTION THE TURKS TAKE, WE URGE THE GREEK GOVERNMENT TO REFRAIN FROM ANY RESPONSE THAT MIGHT LEAD TO AN ESCALATION OF THIS DISPUTE-

B) WITH TURKS:

SECRETARY KISSINGER HAS ASKED THAT WE CONVEY THE  
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PAGE 04 STATE 112889

FOLLOWING: WE UNDERSTAND THAT A TURKISH NAVY HYDROGRAPHIC SHIP HAS SAILED TODAY, REPORTEDLY WITH NAVAL ESCORT, FOR AN AREA OF THE AEGEAN SEA THAT IS DISPUTED BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY. THE U.S. TAKES NO POSITION ON THE MERITS OF THE DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY. WE BELIEVE THAT THE BEST METHOD OF RESOLVING SUCH A DISPUTE IS THROUGH DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES. WHILE WE ARE NOT RAISING THE ISSUE OF WHETHER TURKEY HAS A RIGHT TO EXPLORE IN THE DISPUTED AREA, WE URGENTLY REQUEST THAT THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT NOT BEGIN EXPLORATION UNTIL YOU HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE WITH FOREIGN MINISTER TETENES AT THE NATO FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING IN OTTAWA. WE ALSO WISH TO INFORM THE GOT THAT WE ARE SIMULTANEOUSLY MAKING A DEMARCHE TO THE GREEK GOVERNMENT REQUESTING IT TO AVOID

ANY ACTS WHICH WILL ESCALATE THIS DISPUTE. WE BELIEVE  
THAT THE ATTITUDE OF THE USG IS AND HAS BEEN CLEAR: AN  
OPEN CLASH BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY WOULD HAVE DIS-  
ASTROUS CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ALLIANCE AND FOR THE  
PRINCIPLE OF MUTUAL SECURITY IN ALL OUR COUNTRIES.

THEREFORE, WE URGE THE GOT TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS TO AVOID  
A CONFRONTATION WITH GREECE IN THE AEGEAN.

7. REQUEST YOUR CONCURRENCE IN THE ABOVE BROWN  
UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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